

House Resolution 1752

By: Representatives Gordon of the 162nd, Jackson of the 161st, Bryant of the 160th, Day of the 163rd, Carter of the 159th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending the Georgia Infirmary; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Thomas Williams was born in 1774 and became a successful Savannah
3 merchant, plantation owner, brick factory owner, and slave holder; and

4 WHEREAS, he was a member of the First Baptist Church when he charged a fellow Baptist
5 with the murder of one of his slaves, and when the church then forgave the man of his crime
6 and allowed him to stay a member, Mr. Williams declared himself no longer a member and
7 was formally ex-communicated in July, 1816; and

8 WHEREAS, upon Mr. Williams' death in 1816, he left \$9,000.00 in his will to be used for
9 "relief and protection of afflicted and aged Africans ...," and some wonder if the incident of
10 his slave being murdered combined with his Christian beliefs influenced him to provide for
11 a place of care for these people in his will; and

12 WHEREAS, sixteen years after Mr. Williams' death, his brother, as the executor of his estate,
13 established the Georgia Infirmary, and it was incorporated by the Georgia General Assembly
14 on December 24, 1832; and

15 WHEREAS, the Georgia Infirmary was the first hospital in the United States for African
16 Americans; and

17 WHEREAS, the original board of trustees was chosen from Chatham, Bryan, Liberty,
18 McIntosh, and Camden counties so that slave owners could apply directly to the trustee in
19 their county to admit a Negro slave to the Infirmary; and

20 WHEREAS, the first site of the Georgia Infirmary was somewhat isolated from the city, so
21 on January 17, 1833, the board of trustees accepted a new site donated by Mr. Richard
22 Williams, Mr. Thomas Williams' brother; and

1 WHEREAS, with the freeing of slaves, the Georgia Infirmary expanded its challenge to
2 serving the "needy and poor" and in 1871, it became the sole source of medical care for
3 African Americans in the area; and

4 WHEREAS, the Infirmary became one of the earliest "training schools for colored nurses"
5 with the first nurses graduating in 1906, and it continued to expand its facilities and services
6 through the Depression and both world wars; and

7 WHEREAS, in the 1970's it underwent a financial hardship and closed, but by 1975, with
8 grants from Candler Hospital and the Community Cardiovascular Council, Inc., it was
9 reopened as Georgia's first day center for stroke rehabilitation.

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
11 the members of this body join together in recognizing Mr. Thomas F. Williams as the
12 founder of the Georgia Infirmary and commend the Georgia Infirmary for the services it has
13 provided to the community and this state for many years.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is hereby
15 authorized and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Georgia
16 Infirmary.